

Section IV (b) Private Calls

Policies

- (a) The private call feature will be limited to Supervisory personnel.
- (b) Private calls will have the lowest priority on the system.
- (c) The duration of private calls will be limited to 30 seconds.
- (d) System managers will monitor private calls for appropriateness.
- (e) IPSC reserves the right to disable the private call feature if its use is inappropriate or adversely impacts other users. In times of extreme system usage, private calls may also be prohibited.

1) Background

A “Private Call” (Enhanced Private Call) permits two radios to directly communicate with one another without using a talkgroup. Although potentially a useful feature, unchecked private calls can quickly overwhelm the system and render normal or emergency communications impossible.

2) Capabilities

- (a) A radio site can support only as many simultaneous private calls as there are voice channels at that site.
- (b) Private call capabilities are limited by the radio type:
 - i) Type I radios may be programmed to receive private calls, but are not able to initiate one.
 - ii) Type II radios may be programmed to receive private calls and initiate private calls to up to IDs that are preprogrammed into the radio (the number of preprogrammed IDs varies by radio model.)
 - iii) Type III radios may be programmed to receive private calls and initiate private calls to any user on the system.

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(c) In order for a user to initiate a private call, the following must both be true:

- i) the radio must be programmed to allow private calls, and
- ii) the user's profile in the system must enable private calls.

3) Constraints

- (a) The system is unable to restrict private calls to specific channels; unchecked use of private calls can severely impact all users on a site.
- (b) A private call between two users will consume a radio channel at each site with which the users are affiliated for the duration of the conversation:
 - i) if the private call users are at two different sites, two separate radio channels (one at each site) will be unavailable to other users for the duration of the private call;
 - ii) at a site with three voice channels, six users in three private calls could prevent all other users from communicating on that site.
- (c) Users involved in a private call will not receive calls from their dispatcher or their talkgroup.
- (d) Private calls are simplex; only one user can talk at a time.
- (e) Private calls are not recorded.
- (f) Private calls are not truly "private"; a simple scanner can monitor non-encrypted analog private calls. It is also likely that scanners for non-encrypted digital talkgroup communications and private calls will eventually become available.

4) Recommendations

In order to conserve our scarce frequency resources, agencies should avoid making private calls part of their standard operating procedure. For those who require frequent private conversations, cellular telephones can be effective tools. If needed, the ability to initiate private calls should be restricted to supervisory personnel.

Agencies should work together during the Detailed Design Review (DDR) to identify capacity requirements and determine collectively whether private calls should be permitted.

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If private calls are desired, dispatchers and supervisors may be given full private call privileges. All other users should be limited to receiving private calls.



To permit private calls to be enabled “on the fly,” user equipment should be programmed to permit private calls. The private call feature can then be enabled or disabled from the system manager without requiring the radios to be reprogrammed.